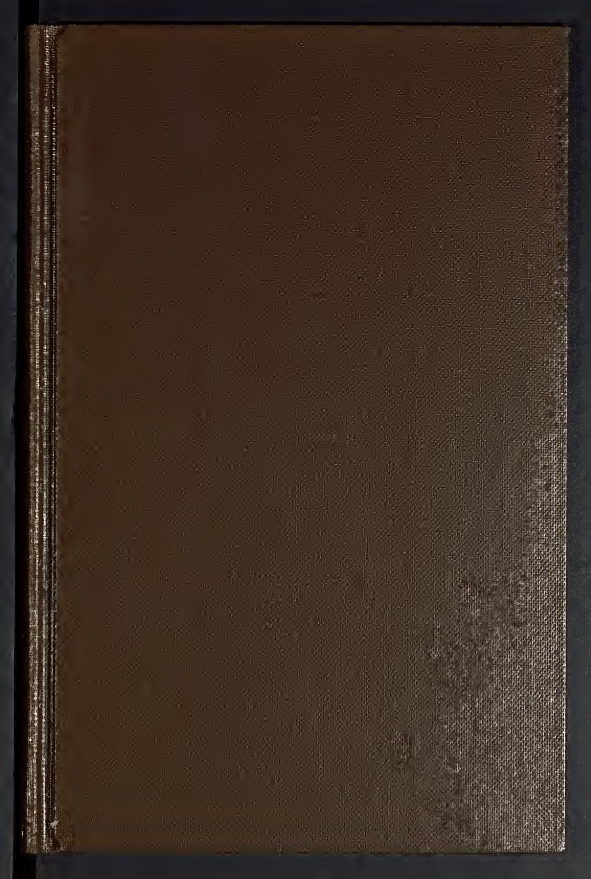




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A
LETTER
TO THE
OWNERS AND OCCUPIERS
OF
SHEEP FARMS,
FROM
EARL STANHOPE.

LONDON:
JAMES RIDGWAY, 169, PICCADILLY.

1828.

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A LETTER
TO THE
OWNERS AND OCCUPIERS
OF
SHEEP FARMS,
FROM
EARL STANHOPE.

GENTLEMEN,

I AM desirous of calling your attention to the Evidence that was received by the Select Committee, of which I was a Member, on the State of the British Wool Trade, to the facts and opinions which it communicates, and to the conclusions which ought to be drawn from a consideration of them. As a preliminary measure, and in order to relieve you from the trouble of perusing the Evidence itself, which consists of 599 pages in folio, I have prepared and published a full, and to the best of my belief, an impartial Abstract of that Evidence, and classed it under several heads. It appeared the more requisite to form such an Ab-

stract, because even those who had the time and the patience to read such a voluminous mass of Evidence, might not otherwise have been able to collect easily and to class correctly those scattered fragments of valuable matter which lie as it were buried, under a mountain, I will not say of rubbish, but of statements which are either unimportant or irrelevant.

The subject naturally divides itself under the following heads of inquiry :

1st. The depression in the prices of British Wools.

2nd. The effects of that depression.

3rd. The causes of that depression.

4th. The remedy for that depression.

Upon the first of these points, viz. *the depression in the prices*, I need not trouble you with many observations, because you know and feel that depression which is generally acknowledged and cannot indeed be denied. I intend, however, in the course of this address, to confine myself strictly to the facts which appear in Evidence, without availing myself of any which I may have learned through other channels, and I am induced therefore to state, though very briefly, the extraordinary, unexampled, but not unaccountable fall which has taken place in the prices of Wools.

In comparing the past and present prices of Wools, and particularly of South Down Wool, it is requisite to consider its *remunerating price*,

which appears ⁽¹⁾ to be 1s. 6d. per lb., and this is stated by two practical Farmers ⁽²⁾ to be equivalent to 60s. per Winchester Quarter for Wheat.

The fall in the prices of South Down Wool ⁽³⁾ and of Cheviot Wool ⁽⁴⁾ since the year 1819, is at least *fifty per cent.*, and in the same period Merino Wool has fallen from 2s. 3d. to 1s. 9d. per lb. ⁽⁵⁾ and Long Wool from 1s. 5½d. to 11½, ⁽⁶⁾ being a fall of above 22 per cent on Merino, and of above 35 per cent. upon Long Wool.

Notwithstanding these facts, which, according to a common Proverb, are stubborn things, Mr. Gott, a Merchant and Manufacturer, states (p. 527) that "Wool partakes only of the general fall applying to all other articles in the same or a less ratio." It would indeed be a very agreeable surprise to his Customers if they found that Cloths had since 1819 fallen 50, or even 35 or 22 per cent., but they all know that such is the case with

(1) Mr. Ellman, Sen. p. 65.

(2) Mr. Ellman, Jun. p. 16, and Mr. Hale, pp. 130 and 131.

(3) Messrs. Ellman state, p. 11 and 64, that the price in 1819 was 1s. 6d., and last year 9d.; Mr. Legg, p. 102, that in 1819 it was 19d., and last year 9d.; and Mr. Pinkney, p. 220, that in 1819 it was 1s. 4½d., and in the last three years 8d.

(4) Mr. Cook states, p. 387, that in 1819 it was 24s. and 25s. per stone, and that last year it was 12s. and 12s. 6d.; and Mr. Sutcliffe, that in 1818 and 1819 it was 29s., and in the two last years 11s. 10½d. Both these Witnesses appeared on the behalf of the Manufacturers.

(5) Mr. Webb Hall, p. 120.

(6) Mr. Healy, p. 36.

respect to Wool only, and not to other articles either of Produce or of Manufacture.

Mr. Jowitt, a Woolstapler, is of opinion (p. 243) that South Down Wool is not at a "very greatly" depressed price considering the deterioration of its quality which he mentions, but he allows (p. 243) that he did not know from his own knowledge what he had stated respecting that supposed deterioration, and that he had not had much experience of late in English Wool.

Mr. Cook, another Manufacturer, seems to consider some English Wool to be dear, and observes with respect to coarse short Wool, that "the price" shews it is scarce."

Mr. Sutcliffe, a Woolstapler, boldly maintains (p. 328) that "a low price of Wool will be eventually more" for the interest of the Land Owner, but he does not even attempt to explain in what manner the low price of Wool will enable him to pay high taxes, and amongst others the Poor's Rates which have rapidly increased, and have in some cases absorbed a very considerable portion of the proceeds of Land, and are, as Mr. Ellman jun. truly observes (p. 13), "quite as heavy" as they were when Wool sold at 2s. 6d. per lb.

The second Point, viz. *the effects of the depression*, are also too well known to you to require any evidence or many comments. It is proved beyond the possibility of doubt, that in many cases ⁽⁷⁾ the Farmers have three years' Stock in

(7) Mr. Pinkney, p. 4, Mr. Ellman, Jun. p. 11, Mr. Hall, p. 120,

hand, and some even that of four or five years, ⁽⁸⁾ that some of them sold their Wool because they had not room to warehouse it, ⁽⁹⁾ that there is very little demand for Wool, and a very great difficulty in selling it. ⁽¹⁰⁾

This gives no concern whatever to Mr. Francis, who is a Manufacturer, and who states (p. 494) that "the Farmer has no right to complain of the "unsaleable nature of his Wool if he will not allow it to be sold at the time's price." I asked him :

"Supposing you had a considerable quantity "of Cloth in hand, for which you asked 10s. a "yard, and found that Cloth unsaleable at that "price, would it be any satisfaction to you to "know that you could dispose of the whole of "that Cloth at 5s. a yard?"

He replied: "Those are extremes almost. It "would be no satisfaction to me; it would be a "disappointment, rather." These are, however, the "extremes" that have actually occurred in South Down Wool, *which has fallen 50 per cent in price* in the course of three years, and this is the "disappointment" which has been grievously expe-

Mr. Hale, p. 129, Mr. King, p. 167, Mr. Ilott, p. 183, Mr. Caudwell, p. 199, Mr. Newton, p. 200, and Mr. Hanning, p. 210.

(8) Mr. Legg, p. 107, Mr. Ilott, p. 181, and Mr. Bull, p. 306.

(9) Mr. Pinkney, p. 6, and Mr. Duke, p. 198.

(10) Mr. Hall, p. 121, Mr. Ilott, p. 179, Mr. Hughes, p. 188, Mr. Hanning, p. 210, Mr. Bull, pp. 304, 316, 319, and Mr. Sutcliffe, p. 321.

rienced by the Wool Growers. If from the introduction at a nominal Duty of Foreign Cloths into the Market, the articles which he sells were to be reduced fifty per cent. in price, what would he think of the candour of any person who were to tell him that he had no right to complain of their being unsaleable, if he would not allow them "to be sold at the time's price?"

He observes (p. 493) that all the British Wool in the Market might be sold "if the Farmers would submit to a proper price," and he explains that *proper price* to mean 6d. or 7d. per lb., being *about one-third of its former value and of its remunerating price.*

He states also (p. 491) his belief that "all the Wool of the country can be sold, if it is allowed to go into its legitimate channel," that is, in his opinion, the Manufacture of Baizes, Flannels, and Blankets; but allows, that in order to get into that channel, *it must fall lower.*

I leave his evidence with the disgust which it must naturally inspire, and pass to that of other Witnesses who, in defiance of all proof, maintain that the Stock on Hand is now *diminishing*.⁽¹¹⁾ Two of those Witnesses, Mr. Bull and Mr. Sutcliffe, should endeavour to reconcile these assertions with those which they made respecting the difficulty of sale, the former of them having

(11) Mr. Bull, p. 305, Mr. Sutcliffe, p. 324, Mr. Cunningham, p. 345, Mr. Hubbard, p. 432, Mr. Goodman, p. 438, and Mr. Sheppard, p. 537.

stated (p. 319) that South Down Wool is unsaleable in Yorkshire, and the latter (p. 321) that he cannot sell South Downs. The other Witnesses who made those assertions may have applied them to the Stocks in the hands of the Woolstaplers, who of course cannot be inclined to keep large quantities which they are unable to sell. This appears to be the real meaning of their testimony, as Mr. Brooke, a Manufacturer at Dewsbury, states (p. 467), that he believes *there is a large accumulation in the hands of the Growers*, and adds, with a real or affected ignorance which must excite our surprise, *that he cannot say why the Wool is not sent to Market as it used to be.*

It is very remarkable that Mr. Brooke declares (p. 466), "The consumption of British Wool is greater now than it has been for some years past;" and that Mr. Gott says (p. 510), "I buy as much of English Wool as ever I did, except during the War;" and yet their evidence, as I shall shew in its proper place, is intended to prove that British Wool is not now applicable to the same purposes as formerly. These are apparent contradictions upon which they should at least attempt to offer some explanation.

It is also proved that many Districts could not be cultivated without Sheep,⁽¹²⁾ which is indeed too evident to require any proof, that the depres-

(12) Mr. Pinkney, p. 4, Mr. Hale, p. 130, Mr. King, p. 169, Mr. Hughes, p. 187, and Mr. Hanning, p. 213.

sion in the price of Wool is injurious to the cultivation of Arable Land,⁽¹³⁾ and that Rents are in several cases paid from the Capital of the Farmers,⁽¹⁴⁾ which has already been very materially diminished.⁽¹⁵⁾ The loss to the Occupier from the fall on the price of Wool is stated by Mr. King (p. 168) to be "not less than 16 per cent.," and by Mr. Brown, (p. 175) to be from 15 to 20 per cent.; and their loss on selling Lambs and old Ewes, which Mr. Ellman says (p. 28) are reduced in price 3s. or 4s. each, is represented by Mr. King (p. 169) to be 12 or 14 per cent., and by Mr. Brown (p. 175) to be about 10 per cent., exclusive of the injury which they sustain by the great depression in the price of Skins.⁽¹⁶⁾

With respect to Rents, it is the opinion of Mr. Ellman, Jun. (p. 27), that the Farmers in his neighbourhood would not continue on their Farms if they supposed that the present prices of Wool would be permanent, *unless the Rent were reduced "at least 33 per cent.;"* of Mr. Woolledge (p. 171), that "a depreciation of 6d. per lb. in the price of "Wool inflicts a loss of 21½ per cent. on the Rental;"

(13) Mr. Hall, p. 122, Mr. Tower, p. 138, Mr. Brown, p. 178, and Mr. Caudwell, p. 199.

(14) Mr. Ellman, Jun. p. 22, Mr. Hall, p. 126, and Mr. Hughes, p. 190.

(15) Mr. Ellman, Jun. p. 20, and Mr. Healy, p. 43.

(16) Mr. Ellman, Jun. p. 22, Mr. Healy, p. 44, Mr. Calcraft, p. 55, Mr. Ellman, Sen. p. 60, Mr. Hughes, 190, and Mr. Nottidge, p. 227.

and of Mr. Hughes, that the low price of Wool "will make a difference of *at least 20 per cent. in the Rent.*" In fact it is proved by Mr. Ellman, Jun. (p. 21), that his own Rent has been reduced from £900 to £700; by Mr. Campbell (p. 60), that "a reduction of 25 per cent. has been given" on that account; and by Mr. Newton (p. 202), that the Rent has been reduced "more than one-half;" that the low prices have had a very great effect both in lowering Rents and in stopping the payment of Rents; that many "have had their Rents lowered, and been obliged afterwards to give up the Land;" and that the distress is "most seriously felt, all through Oxfordshire, Hampshire, Berkshire, and Wiltshire;" and Mr. Hanning says (p. 214) with respect to thin light lands, "I question whether that character of Land would be able to pay the existing Taxes *without any Rent.*" It is also shewn by Mr. Woolledge (pp. 170 and 171), that a fall of 6d. per lb. in Wool produced upon 8,890 Acres a Loss of £923; and by Mr. Ilott (p. 183) that it occasions an annual loss in Dorsetshire of £61,500, but the depression of price being 9d. per lb., the annual loss thus sustained is £92,250; and one Farmer states, that he lost last year £411; and another, that he should lose by his Stock on Hand "more than £300." Lord Napier states (p. 29), "We depend for our Rents solely upon the sale of Wool, Draught Ewes and Lambs, without any reference to cultiva-

"tion;" and he thinks that "even more" than one half of the whole extent of Scotland is exclusively occupied in the rearing of Cheviot or black-faced Sheep, and upon an average one-half of the Rents of such Lands is paid from the produce of the Fleece, which he states (p. 33) to have fallen *fifty per cent in value*.

On the other hand Mr. Hubbard, a Woolstapler, says (pp. 377 and 431), "taking the Fleece and "the Carcase, I am of opinion that on the whole "the Farmer now gets as much per acre for his "Sheep as he did in 1800 or 1805." It is denied by Mr. Campbell (p. 61), that a rise in the price of Meat is a compensation for the fall in the price of Wool, and Farmers who sell both Fleeces and Carcases are better judges than a Woolstapler upon this subject. The comparison is not between last year and the year 1800 or 1805, but between last year and the year 1819, or the other years in which the 6d. Duty on Foreign Wool was in existence; and it appears by a Table published in the Evidence (p. 499, &c.), that the Average Price of Mutton per Stone, from 1800 to 1805, both inclusive, was about 5s. 8d., and in the year 1819 only 3s. 6½d., and it is stated by Mr. Tower (p. 189) to have been last year 5s.

It is indeed said that Farmers have kept their Wool "upon speculation," and have thus large Stocks on Hand, but they cannot be blamed for retaining any article which they are not obliged to sell, and for which they cannot obtain a remun-

nerating price. If all of them had been obliged to sell, which unfortunately may become the case with many of them, it is perfectly clear and undeniably true, that, as Mr. Ellman, jun. observes, (p. 19) the price would have been considerably lower. The objection which is urged by their opponents is therefore an argument upon the other side of the question.

The third Point, viz. *the causes of the depression*, deserves great attention from the contradictory evidence which has been adduced, and from the variety of causes which have been assigned.

One of those causes is unquestionably the alteration in the currency, and this is the opinion not only of Mr. Western himself⁽¹⁷⁾ but also of Mr. Healy a Farmer,⁽¹⁸⁾ and of several Woolstaplers, and of a Manufacturer,⁽¹⁹⁾ and it is thought by several Witnesses that the total suppression of small Notes in England will still further reduce the prices of Wool.⁽²⁰⁾ In those opinions I entirely concur, but the alteration in the Currency explains only to a certain degree, and not in its full extent, the depression in the price of Wool; for it is quite obvious that it could not operate more upon Wool than upon other articles which, as is

(17) P. 205.

(18) Mr. Healy, pp. 48 and 49.

(19) Mr. Jowitt, p. 246, Mr. Fison, pp. 364 and 367, Mr. Hubbard, pp. 377, 431, and 432, and Mr. Gott, p. 527.

(20) Mr. Western, p. 209, Mr. Sutcliffe, pp. 325, 339, and 340, and Mr. Hubbard, pp. 378 and 432.

well known, have not sustained a similar reduction in their value.

Another cause which is mentioned by several witnesses,⁽²¹⁾ and which may in some measure have contributed to produce the depression, is the substitution by the labouring classes of Cotton for Woollen in their Clothing.

One of the supposed causes upon which the Manufacturers lay great stress, is the deterioration that they allege to have taken place in the quality of South Down Wool. As to this point, it is proved by several Witnesses,⁽²²⁾ that their Wool is the same in quality as it was some years ago; and by several others,⁽²³⁾ that their's has actually improved: and we know upon the authority of Mr. Western (p. 209), that it is generally equal to what it was.

I am ready to admit, and you will not be disposed to dispute, that where the Breed has been crossed, the quality is deteriorated; but where the Breed has been unmixed, we are justified by the Evidence of those Witnesses in denying that

(21) Mr. H. Hughes, p. 99, Mr. Hubbard, pp. 370 and 430, Mr. Tweedale, p. 482, Mr. Webb, p. 497, and Mr. Ireland, pp. 592 and 596.

(22) Mr. Pinkney, p. 5, Mr. Ellman, Jun. p. 11, Mr. Legg, p. 103, Mr. Webb Hall, p. 121, Mr. Tower, p. 136, Mr. Brown, p. 174, and Mr. Hanning, p. 212.

(23) Mr. Calcraft, p. 52, Mr. Ellman, Sen. pp. 62 and 63, Mr. Boys, p. 71, Mr. Hales, p. 132, Mr. King, p. 168, Mr. Woolledge, p. 172, Mr. Duke, p. 194, Mr. Cudwell, p. 189, and Mr. Newton, p. 204.

any such deterioration has taken place. The deterioration which is mentioned by two Farmers, by Mr. Pinkney (p. 5) and by Mr. Healy (p. 41), is referred to that circumstance.

On the part of the Manufacturers, several Witnesses⁽²⁴⁾ have stated that English Wool is generally deteriorated. I do not refer upon this point to the evidence of Mr. Jowitt, because, as I have above remarked, he allowed that he did not know from his own knowledge what he had stated upon the subject, and had not much experience of late in British Wool.

It is confidently asserted by one of those Witnesses, Mr. Hubbard, (p. 428) that the Sussex South Downs which have not been crossed are very much deteriorated in quality; and by another, Mr. Sutcliffe (p. 333), that he does not think "there is any which is not deteriorated;" but those assertions have been clearly and satisfactorily disproved by other and better evidence.

Some of the Witnesses⁽²⁵⁾ represent the South Down Wool to be less fitted than it was formerly to make Cloth; but Mr. Brooke asserts (p. 404),

(24) Mr. Hughes, p. 83, Mr. Legg, p. 110, Mr. Nottidge, p. 223, Mr. Varley, p. 267, Mr. Bull, pp. 306 and 308, Mr. Sutcliffe, pp. 332 and 333, Mr. Cunningham, p. 343, Mr. Fison, p. 355, Mr. Hubbard, pp. 371, 378, and 428, Mr. Brooke, pp. 399, 403, and 408, Mr. Swaine, p. 418, Mr. Goodman, pp. 435, 442, and 444, Mr. Tweedale, pp. 487 and 488, Mr. Webb, p. 495, Mr. Sheppard, p. 535, and Mr. Ireland, pp. 577 and 578.

(25) Mr. Legg, p. 103, Mr. Swaine, p. 418, Mr. Goodman, p. 442, and Mr. Sheppard, p. 535.

that "the short grown Wool is deteriorated for any purpose to which it may be put."

Mr. Swaine states (p. 418), that it is *six or seven years since* British Wool has ceased to be what it was, but Mr. Goodman (p. 435) considers the deterioration to have commenced *twenty-one years ago*; and Mr. Hughes (p. 83) says, that it took place *within the last twelve or fifteen years*.

So rapid is this supposed deterioration, that in the opinion of Mr. Tweedale (p. 488), English Wool has altered in its quality every year within the last four years, and has grown worse for his purposes every year; and in that of Mr. Ireland (p. 578), the Clip of 1827 is worse than that of 1825. So extraordinary are its effects, that Mr. Ireland declares (p. 578), that he and his partners are obliged to *use the finest sorts of Wool for the common Livery Cloth*, in consequence of the Wool having become coarser than it used to be; but this need not surprise us, for we find by the evidence of Mr. Tweedale, a Manufacturer, (p. 487,) that Foreign Wool was used for making Livery Cloths in the year 1825, *when Foreign Wool was admitted at a nominal Duty*, and therefore at so low a price as to ensure its preference by the Manufacturers.

I intend presently to notice this wonderful discovery, and in this place I will only remark that if the progressive and rapid deterioration in the quality of South Down Wool had been proved, instead of having been disproved by evidence, it

could not, for the two following reasons, be a cause of the actual depression in its price.

1st. We learn from Mr. Fison, a Wool Dealer, (p. 367) that there is a fall in price of $1\frac{1}{2}d.$ in consequence of the deterioration of the Wool, but *that does not and cannot account for a fall of 9d. per lb.* that is of $7\frac{1}{2}d.$ more.

2nd. It is unquestionably true, for it is evident from theory as well as from experience with respect to other articles, that as Mr. Ellman, Sen. observes (p. 63), if some Wool is of bad quality, "*that would increase the price of the best quality.*"

Connected with this supposed cause is the superior quality of Foreign Wool, its greater utility in Manufactures, and the alleged necessity of employing it in consequence of a change in the tastes and habits of the public.

South Down Wool is represented by some Witnesses to have all sorts of bad qualities, and to make⁽²⁶⁾ "a furzey, soft, hairy piece;" but one of them⁽²⁷⁾ states that the better sorts of it may answer "*for light and very fine Goods,*" and [another⁽²⁸⁾ that it makes a "*stout heavy Cloth.*"

"Foreign Wool is soft, it finishes well, and it handles well, and it mills well," according to the representation of one of them;⁽²⁹⁾ but here

(26) Mr. Sutcliffe, p. 322;

(27) Mr. Cook, p. 392.

(28) Mr. Ireland, p. 590.

(29) Mr. Sutcliffe, p. 322.

again there is an unfortunate discordance in their opinions, for Mr. Ireland states (p. 591) that "the Foreign Wool wastes *more* than the English," and Mr. Francis states the direct contrary (p. 489), that "the waste in the Foreign Wool is *less* than "in the English."

There is another strange difference in the statements of the Witnesses who appeared on the behalf of the Manufacturers, for while Mr. Gott says (p. 512) that Foreign Wool makes a *finer* and therefore a more valuable Cloth, Mr. Cook says (p. 385) "in the *very low* description of goods we "use the Foreign Wool entirely."

It is confessed both by Mr. Francis and also by Mr. Ireland, that they make Livery Cloth entirely of Foreign Wool, ⁽³⁰⁾ and Mr. Ireland (p. 585) asserts "*if we were to attempt to make our Livery Cloths from English Wool we cannot sell them at "all."*" It is also proved by Mr. Cook (p. 385) that *Foreign Wool is used for Negro Clothing*. It seems therefore that the Wools which but a short time since were used for superfine Cloths are now become unfit for Liveries and even for Negro Clothing. It is difficult to say where this deterioration will end, and whether in the course of a few months English Wool will not become so much worse in quality as to be quite useless for any purpose whatever, except indeed for manuring the Land. Surely it would be a fit subject of inquiry by the Royal Society, and in the two Universi-

(30) Mr. Francis, p. 487, and Mr. Ireland, p. 385.

ties that are to be established it might be proposed as a Prize, to ascertain what are the causes of this most marvellous alteration in the qualities of English Wool.

Tastes, according to a trite and true saying, do not admit of dispute, and vary in different times as well as in different countries, but according to the statements of some of the Witnesses the tastes of the people of England have lately undergone an alteration which is even as marvellous as that of the Wool of England, and which can be attributed only to that "March of Intellect" of which we have heard so much, and of which unhappily we are likely to hear more. Even amongst those classes to whom economy in dress as well as in other articles of expenditure is and must be a very important consideration, English Cloth seems to be despised, and Foreign Cloth to be generally used, so that Mr. Goodman states (p. 441) "*I do not think we could induce our labourers to wear Cloths manufactured from any but Foreign Wools,*" and that, according to the evidence of Mr. Notidge (p. 229) the Manufacturers say "*they could not sell the Cloth made from English Wool,*" and according to Mr. Francis (p. 490) "*the Cloths made from English Wools are unsaleable.*" This, like other wonders, must excite our astonishment till the cause is explained, and then, as in the story of Columbus and the Egg, we only wonder at ourselves for not having discovered it sooner.

We all know that *Dates* are sometimes of the

greatest importance, and they are so in this case, as well as in many others. The *Date* of all these surprising discoveries, of all these marvellous changes, is about the year 1825, when a *Free Trade in Wool was established*. Then, as by the stroke of a magical wand, every thing changed, and this, to use an expression of Mr. Sheppard, (p. 585) "opened the eyes of people who really "were in darkness." The deterioration of British Wool was then generally acknowledged, although it had escaped the notice of Mr. Bischoff who, as it appears (p. 559) wrote, in 1819, a Pamphlet upon the subject, in which he did not say one word respecting that deterioration. Then it was that the labourers could not be induced to wear any thing but Foreign Cloths, and that Foreign Wool was employed for Liveries, and even for Negro Clothing. And thus the whole mystery is solved.

In fact we learn from Mr. Cook, (p. 390) that he buys "some Foreign Wool as low as 2½d. per lb. "and less than that," and from Mr. Brooke (p. 460) that he imports Foreign Wool at 4d. per lb. Mr. Brooke allows (p. 409) that he began to use the Foreign Wools *exclusively* about the time that the Duty was taken off, and Mr. Francis (p. 487) that in making Livery Cloth, he "always used English Wool before 1825."

When the remunerating price for South Down Wool is 1s. 6d. per lb., when it is sold at present for 8d. or 9d., when Cheviot Wool is sold for 5d.,

and white Highland Wool for 4d $\frac{1}{2}$., can we be astonished that Manufacturers prefer Foreign Wools which they purchase "*as low as 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per lb. and even less than that?*" Indeed Mr. Walker, a manufacturer, states (p. 470), it was no doubt the low price of Foreign Wool that originally induced him to use it, and that brought it into competition with the British. Mr. Nottidge, who, as well as Mr. Walker, appeared on the behalf of the Manufacturers, states (p. 230), "I believe the depreciation in the price of German Wool was a great inducement to the Manufacturers to use it instead of the South Down Wool, which might be about four years ago;" and he expresses his opinion (p. 232) that "the cheapness of Foreign Wool has stopped the demand for fine English Wools."

This leads me to consider the *immense Importation of Foreign Wool*, which is the principal, for it is not the sole, cause of the great depression in the price of British Wool.

Upon this point I will not refer merely to the evidence of Farmers, whom it is the fashion, in some quarters, to revile as interested, selfish, and narrow-minded; and who, with respect to Corn, as well as with respect to Wool, have cruelly suffered by experiments in Political Economy, and by systems of Free Trade. Several Farmers, ⁽³¹⁾

(31) Mr. Pinkney, pp. 4, 5, and 6, Mr. Ellman, Jun. pp. 13 and 24, Mr. Healy, p. 51, Mr. Hall, pp. 121 and 122, Mr. Brown, p. 175,

and also Mr. Tower,⁽³²⁾ Mr. Hanning,⁽³³⁾ several Woolstaplers,⁽³⁴⁾ a Blackwell Hall Factor,⁽³⁵⁾ a Wool Agent,⁽³⁶⁾ a Wool Dealer,⁽³⁷⁾ a Wool Factor,⁽³⁸⁾ and even a Manufacturer,⁽³⁹⁾—all concur in opinion that the depression in the price arose from the immense Importation of Foreign Wool. I refer to the Evidence, which you will find in a very convenient form in the Abstract that I have before mentioned; and I will quote here only that of Lord Napier, who states (p. 29) “*the great Importation was in the year 1825; that year the prices were, 10d. per lb. and the next year they came down to 5d.*” Such is the natural and necessary effect in this, and indeed in every other, case of glutting the Market.

I need not here quote Mr. Ireland, because he says (p. 582) that he does not think the enormous Importation of Foreign Wool has had a *tendency to reduce the price* of British Wool, although he allows afterwards (p. 592) that “*the Importation of Foreign Wool must have helped*” to produce the present depressed price of British Wool, so

Mr. Hott, p. 182, Mr. Hughes, pp. 187 and 188, Mr. Duke, p. 197, and Mr. Caudwell, p. 190.

(32) P. 140. (33) P. 210.

(34) Mr. Legg, pp. 100, 101, and 103, Mr. Hott, pp. 182 and 183, Mr. Nottidge, pp. 210, 224, 226, 230, and 232, Mr. Cunningham, pp. 344 and 348, and Mr. Hubbard, p. 429.

(35) Mr. H. Hughes, pp. 73, 84, 91, and 93.

(36) Mr. Bull, pp. 307, 312, and 321. (37) Mr. Fison, 372.

(38) Mr. Goodman, pp. 440 and 442.

(39) Mr. Tweedale, p. 464.

that I am at a loss to know what his real opinion is upon this point.

On the side of the Manufacturers it is thought by Mr. Jowett (p. 243) that the Importation of Foreign Wool *has had nothing to do* with reducing the price of British Wool; and the same opinion is expressed by Mr. Gott (p. 530) and by Mr. Bischoff (p. 564). Indeed Mr. Gott says (p. 530) "*the great Importation of Foreign Wool in my opinion has aided the price of British Wool.*" Mr. Sutcliffe (p. 339) asserts "*the more Wool is imported the better*" for the Owner of Land; and Mr. Brooke declares (p. 463) that in his opinion *a Free Trade in Wool would be advantageous to the Wool Growers and tend to raise the price of English Wool in the Home Market.*

These great Political Economists who appear to be worthy disciples of some of the late Cabinet Ministers will, I hope, for the sake of their own consistency, be ready to admit that a *Free Trade* in Cloths, in Shoes, and in all other articles which, as far as price is concerned, could be imported duty free with great benefit to the Consumers, would tend to raise the prices of those articles in the Home Market. At present the Manufacturers enjoy some protection, and Foreign Cloths pay upon Importation a Duty of 15 per Cent., but this seems a matter of perfect indifference to Mr. Brooke, who says (p. 447) that he does not know what is the amount of that Duty, and adds, "*I have not given the thing a consideration.*" I will

not waste your time or my own by discussing opinions which are disproved by general experience, and which are also too unreasonable to deserve any observation.

If Mr. Sutcliffe had confined his remark that "the more Wool is imported the better" to those sorts of Wool and to those only which cannot be grown in this country, and which do not supersede the use of our own, we should not dissent from that statement, which, however, would not be of any service to his views. If by importing an article which we cannot produce, we increase the demand for another article which we do produce, and which is mixed with it in a manufacture, this is no doubt an advantage to the country; but such is not and cannot be the case, if we can produce both the articles in question. Take for example a familiar instance, that of plated goods. The Importation of silver, which is not produced in this country, promotes the consumption of copper which is produced in this country, and which is employed with it in making those articles; but can it be seriously contended by any reasonable person that it would be desirable for those who have Mines of Copper or tend to raise the price of it in our markets, if the Copper as well as the Silver were to be imported?

I pass now to the fourth and last point of inquiry, viz. *the remedy for the depression in the price of English Wools*. We have just seen that the immense Importation of Foreign Wools at a duty

of $\frac{1}{2}$ d. or 1d. per lb. is the principal cause of that depression, and from that circumstance alone, exclusive of any Evidence upon the subject, we might justly argue that the exclusion, either by heavy duties or by an actual prohibition, of such Foreign Wools as can be produced at home, and as supersede the use of our own, would in a considerable degree be a remedy for the evil.

Such is the opinion of several Witnesses,⁽⁴⁰⁾ and some facts which they have stated are of great importance. The expectation that a Duty would be imposed had lately an influence upon the Market, as Mr. Ellman, Jun., informs us (p. 14), "the instant that it was understood that the subject was going to be taken up in Parliament, there was a revival of the Trade, and several Woolstaplers were inquiring about Wool; but as soon as the declaration of His Majesty's Government appeared, this put an end to it at once." The expectation that a Duty would be discontinued, had formerly the effect which is stated by Mr. Duke (p. 198), who says, "When it was talked of that the Duty was to be taken off the Foreign Wools, we could not get a person to buy at any price." Thus has the experience of the past justified the anticipations of the future, which are entertained by these and by several other Witnesses, with regard to the result of im-

(40) Mr. Pinkney, p. 5, Mr. Ellman, Jun. p. 25, Mr. Ellman, Sen. p. 69, Mr. Hughes, p. 90, Mr. Legg, p. 113, Mr. Duke, p. 197, Mr. Newton, p. 203, and Mr. Ireland, p. 595.

posing a higher Duty on Wool. We know also what were the effects of the former Duty, that during its continuance, all the South Down Wool was purchased; "there was none left in the hands of the Farmers,"⁽⁴¹⁾ that it experienced less than Corn and animal food⁽⁴²⁾ the depression of price which was produced by Mr. Peel's Bill; and, as we have seen above, that its price was very much higher than it is at present. It is allowed even by Mr. Nottidge, who is a Wool-stapler, that in the year 1823, he could have sold any quantity of fine Wool.

You will not be surprised to learn that Mr. Gott, like other Political Economists, thinks (p. 513) a Duty on Foreign Wool would "*lower the price of British Wool*," and that if the present nominal Duty of 1d. or 1d. per lb. were to be repealed, that the price of British Wool (p. 517) "*would rise certainly*." This is indeed quite consistent with the other doctrines which he advanced (p. 530), and which I have already quoted; but this is only an additional proof that if his evidence be admitted with respect to matters of fact, his evidence, like those of some other Witnesses, should altogether be rejected with respect to matters of opinion. Similar assertions are made by three other Witnesses;⁽⁴³⁾ and Mr. Sutcliffe

(41) Mr. Ellman, Sen. p. 67.

(42) Mr. Healy, p. 49, and Mr. Ellman, Sen. p. 67.

(43) Mr. Hubbard, pp. 375 and 429, Mr. Goodman, pp. 442 and 443, and Mr. Nussey, p. 453.

tells us (p. 328), "*the Tax upon Foreign Wool lowered the price of English Wool; how that arose, I cannot say.*" Undoubtedly, he "cannot say," nor can any one else say how an effect arose from a cause which did not produce it, and I should have been somewhat surprised if he had even attempted to give an explanation. He asserts also (p. 337), that "*the Price of British Wool advanced after the Tax was taken off;*" and we have seen in a former part of this address that his assertion is directly contrary to the fact, and that British Wool instead of having "advanced" in price, as he pretends, fell in value at least 50 per cent. Mr. Cunningham, who stated (p. 347) that "*when the Duty was put on in 1819, the English Market immediately fell,*" was asked by me, "was not it the year of Mr. Peel's Bill affecting the Currency?" To which he replied, "I cannot say, indeed." The date of Mr. Peel's Bill, which was so tremendous in its operation, and was in fact an "Edict of Confiscation," seems to have been unknown or forgotten by him, although he speaks of a fall in the price of Wool in the very year when that Bill was passed. Mr. Jowitt has made a very curious discovery (p. 259), that in the years 1820, 1821, and 1822, the Duty on Wool "*reduced the price very low, as well as Meat also; and, I think, Corn as well.*" How unfortunate it is that the result of his researches in Political Economy was not at that time communicated to an astonished and ad-

miring World; and how much trouble and embarrassment would it have spared to those Ministers who, being strangely puzzled to account for the extraordinary fall of prices, or being unwilling to confess the truth, represented it as the effect of "excessive production," of too abundant a supply! Possibly Mr. Jowitt would explain from the same cause the fall of 30 and 40 per cent. which took place at the same time in West India, and other Foreign Produce, and all the calamities which afflicted this country during that period of great and general distress. I ought perhaps to apologize for having detained you by the mere mention of such absurdities; but it is desirable to shew what are the opinions, and therefore what is the weight and authority of some Witnesses, upon whose Evidence our opponents may be inclined to found their flimsy and fallacious theories.

It will perhaps be said by them, we admit the utility and importance of a Duty to the Wool Growers; we know that it will tend to raise the price of their commodities, and by increasing their means of consumption, will be beneficial in the Home Market⁽⁴⁴⁾ to the Manufacturers; but we fear the effect that it might produce in the Foreign Market. I reply that the Home Market, in which I include of course that of our Colonies, is by far the most important, the most secure, and also the most extensive,⁽⁴⁵⁾ con-

(44) Mr. Ellman, Jun. p. 25, and Mr. Hughes, p. 73.

(45) Mr. Sutcliffe, p. 330, and Mr. Bischoff, p. 560.

suming, as it does, *four-fifths of all the finer Goods which are manufactured.*⁽⁴⁶⁾ It may indeed become ere long the only Market; for Mr. H. Hughes, a Blackwell Hall Factor, states, (p. 80,) "I have "not the least doubt," that, "in a few years," the Export of our Woollen Manufactures to North America, and to many States of the Continent, will cease; and he observes very justly (p. 81), that our Manufacturers must then look exclusively to the Home Market and to our Colonies, and perhaps to the South American States for the sale of their Goods. I reply also that the former Duty was not injurious to our Foreign Trade; and such is the opinion of Mr. Ebsworth, and it is stated by Mr. Walker, a Manufacturer (p. 471), that during the continuance of that Duty, his Trade was *better than it is at present*; and (p. 473), that he found less difficulty than he has done since in disposing of his Goods.

On referring to an Account in the Appendix to the Evidence (pp. 628 and 629), we find that the average amount in Declared Value of the Woollen Goods exported from the United Kingdom was, during the five years of the 6d. Duty, £6,033,920, and in the four following years only £5,632,535, being an average *decrease* of £401,385 since the Duty was lowered.

What must we then say of the information or of the candour of Mr. Gott, who states (p. 520), that his Trade was "very much hurt by the

(46) Mr. Ebsworth, p. 153.

"Duty;" or of Mr. Bischoff, who states (p. 555), that the Duty "reduced the Export of Cloth very considerably?" How are we to reconcile the statement of Mr. H. Hughes (p. 78) "as respects our Export Trade, certainly the Duty of 6d. per lb. was detrimental," with another statement which he makes in the very same page, that he believes the Exportation of Pieces of Cloth is "much less" since the Duty was lowered than before?

The Exportation, which must be injurious to our Manufacturers, of Yarn has increased from 14,142½ lbs. in the year 1819 to 255,659 lbs. in the course of last year, that is, the supply to Foreign Countries of Materials employed by them in Manufactures has become *eighteen times greater* than it was before. And here I must observe, that the Importation of Long Wool which also is very prejudicial to our Manufacturers,⁽⁴⁷⁾ does not appear to have been beneficial to the Wool Growers.⁽⁴⁸⁾ It is difficult, if not impossible, to know what is the opinion upon this point of Mr. Gott, as he says (p. 520) that he thinks the Long Wool would be better retained at home; and (p. 521) that he has no objection at all to the

(47) Mr. Healy, p. 39, Mr. Legg, p. 119, Mr. Nottidge, p. 226, Mr. Sutcliffe, p. 334, and Mr. Goodman, p. 444. It is denied by Mr. Bischoff, p. 560.

(48) Mr. Healy, p. 39, Mr. Boys, p. 71, Mr. King, p. 169, Mr. Brown, p. 175, Mr. Hughes, p. 188, Mr. Duke, p. 195, and Mr. Hanning, p. 211.

increased Exportation of British Wool and British Yarn. Mr. Hubbard (pp. 375 and 376) and Mr. Goodman (p. 439) express their opinion that the Wools of Kent have risen in consequence; but Mr. Boys, who is a Farmer in Kent, considers (p. 71) of no benefit whatever the permission to export Wool. Although that Exportation has considerably increased, it appears by the evidence of Mr. Smith (p. 455) that last year "the proportion of *Foreign Wool imported* was 104 lbs. and a "Fraction to every 1 lb. of *English Wool exported*."

I am aware that although in the four last years there was upon an average a *decrease* of 201,898 Yards in the quantity of Goods exported, there was however an *increase* of 261,745 Pieces, as compared with the Averages of the five preceding years. This does not however affect in any degree the observations which I have just made, because it is obvious that the profit to the individual Manufacturers whose Goods are exported, and to the Country itself, is derived from the Value of the articles and not from their Quantity.

With respect to the Exportation of Woollen Goods, it is our interest as well as our bounden duty, to encourage that to our Colonies, and also Importations from them, and we know that from those extensive and very valuable Colonies of New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land, Wools are imported which⁽⁴⁹⁾ "are sought for more

(49) Mr. H. Hughes, p. 75.

“ than any other description,” which are⁽⁵⁰⁾ “ better
 “ adapted” even than German Wools to mix with
 our own, which⁽⁵¹⁾ are “ decidedly preferred to
 “ the apparently similar descriptions of German
 “ Wools,” and which⁽⁵²⁾ produce Cloth that can-
 not be equalled for “ fineness of texture, and soft-
 “ ness of quality.” Of that Wool two millions of
 pounds are said to have arrived last year,⁽⁵³⁾ and
 the same quantity is expected in the present
 year; ⁽⁵⁴⁾ the quantity appears even to be “ increas-
 “ ing,” and that importation ought to be promoted
 instead of being checked by any Duty whatever,
 because *those Wools do “ not in the least” interfere*
with the use of British Wool, ⁽⁵⁵⁾ and because the
 Sale Amount of Import from those Colonies is
 “ certainly not at present” equal to the export to
 them. ⁽⁵⁷⁾ To those Colonies “ very considerable
 “ quantities of Woollen Goods, and of Cotton
 “ Goods are exported, ⁽⁵⁸⁾ and the quantity of
 “ Wool produced in those Colonies will be
 “ bounded only by the profitable return they may

(50) Mr. H. Hughes, p. 76, and Mr. Donaldson, p. 117.

(51) Mr. Donaldson, p. 117.

(52) Mr. H. Hughes, p. 89. Mr. Donaldson states, p. 118, that
 the Van Diemen's Land Wool “ has always been more saleable than
 “ German Wools of the same description.”

(53) Mr. H. Hughes, p. 74.

(54) Mr. Donaldson, p. 117.

(55) Mr. Legg, p. 115, Mr. Ebsworth, p. 148.

(56) Mr. Donaldson, p. 117.

(57) Mr. Donaldson, p. 116.

(58) Mr. Donaldson, p. 119.

“hope to obtain. The Land applicable to that “course of Husbandry is unlimited.”⁽⁵⁹⁾ We know also, from the authority of Mr. Donaldson (p. 117) that the sale of Wools from those Colonies was “very considerably” affected by the importation of German Wools in 1825, and that (p. 119) a Duty on the importation of European Wool would “unquestionably” be beneficial to the Colony of Van Diemen’s Land. A paternal and protecting Government would, by encouraging the importation of those Wools which do “not in the least” interfere with the use of British Wools, promote the prosperity, and therefore the means of consumption of those Colonies, and would thus promote also, the power and welfare of this country. Such wisdom and patriotism was not, however, to be expected from those Political Economists who lately retired from the Administration.

With respect to the Wools of our own Colonies, it would be better even that a bounty should be granted than that any Duty should be imposed on their importation; and with respect to a Duty on Continental Wools, two very opposite and contradictory opinions have been expressed. One of our Friends stated in Parliament, that he thought a Duty of 6d. per lb, would give an “excessive “protection,” and another has since told me that the same Duty would not, in his opinion, be sufficient, and would still allow Foreign Wools to supersede our own.

(59) Mr. Donaldson, p. 117.

As to the first of these remarks, the remunerating price of South Down Wool being not less than 1s. 6d. per lb., a Duty of 6d. per lb. on those descriptions of Wool which might compete with it is only a Duty of 33 per cent., and cannot surely be called "excessive." It is about the same as is granted upon Foreign Silks, and upon many other manufactured Goods which are much less important to this Country than the growth of its Wool.

As to the second of these remarks, I must observe that if the object could not be attained by a 6d. Duty, I would recommend an absolute prohibition. From Evidence which has been received ⁽⁶⁰⁾ I see no reason to doubt that a 6d. Duty would be effectual for the purpose, as we learn ⁽⁶¹⁾ that it excluded Foreign Wools from 1s. 6d. downwards, and ⁽⁶²⁾ that the present price of those Wools which have superseded the use of our own, is from 6d. to 1s. 6d. It appears also from the evidence of Mr. Ireland (p. 594) that the "advantage in the price" between a Cloth made of German Wool and one made of English, both of which cost him 10s. a yard, "would not be more than 3 per cent., 2½d. "a yard," and it is manifest that the addition of a 6d. Duty would render that Cloth dearer than the English.

Although Mr. H. Hughes expressed very strongly

(60) Mr. Ellman, Sen, p. 69, Mr. H. Hughes, p. 98, and Mr. Legg, p. 105.

(61) Mr. H. Hughes, p. 98.

(62) Mr. Ebsworth, p. 149.

his disapprobation of a 6d. Duty, and his apprehension that it would ruin the Foreign Trade of the Country, he is however of opinion, as Mr. Legg and Mr. Ebsworth are also, that no injury would arise from it if a Drawback commensurate with the Duty were to be allowed on Exportation.⁽⁶³⁾ The Duty being intended not for Revenue but for Protection, it would be no loss to the State if even the whole amount which had been received for Duty were to be returned in a Drawback, and as "three-fourths of the Foreign Wool 'imported are consumed in England,'"⁽⁶⁴⁾ the Drawback would be granted only on one-fourth part of the quantity imported. With such an arrangement the Manufacturers could not reasonably fear that their *real interests* would be injured, or that their *legitimate profits* would be lost.

Their *real interests* would be best promoted by the prosperity of their customers at home, by increasing, and not by reducing the means of consumption in our own Markets. Their *legitimate profits* are not such as they derive from those low prices which impoverish one portion of the community, for the apparent, though not for the permanent advantage of another, and which are utterly incompatible with high taxation.

The price of South Down Wool in the year 1759, appears, by an Account produced by Mr.

(63) Mr. H. Hughes, p. 73, Mr. Legg, pp. 101 and 113, and Mr. Ebsworth, p. 153.

(64) Mr. H. Hughes, p. 94.

Legg, (p. 102), to have been 8½d. per lb. which is about its present value. At that period the Debts, and Taxes, and Poors' Rates, and all the other burthens, were very trifling in their amount, as compared with what they now are ; and if they could be reduced to what they then were, you would not complain of the present low prices, or suffer from their effects. The only practicable mode of sustaining the present burthens is to be found in prices which, in their amount, are proportional to those burthens, and to suppose the contrary would be as monstrous an absurdity as that which I once heard from a Political Economist, who very gravely told me, that if the price of a Quarter of Wheat could be permanently reduced in this country from *sixty* shillings to *ten*, it would still be possible to raise annually *fifty* millions of taxes.

You, who are the Wool Growers, suffer in common with the Corn Growers, with the Ship Owners, and with many other classes of society, from new and pernicious systems which have been adopted, and in common with all classes, from the alteration of the Currency. No change has yet taken place in those fatal systems which have been the fruitful sources of such calamities, and may ultimately produce consequences of which at present I forbear to speak. No redress has yet been granted, neither justice nor protection has been received, and too many of you have reason to exclaim with Mr. Duke (p. 198), in addressing the Committee, " may I pray your Lord-

“ships to take this case into serious consideration,
“and to save me and my Brother Flock Masters
“from utter ruin.”

As an Individual, I am little interested in the prices of Wool, but I should consider it a dereliction of my public duty to you and to my Country if I were to remain silent upon this occasion ; and the cause of British Agriculture, whenever it can be protected or promoted, will always find a zealous advocate in

Your very faithful Servant,

STANHOPE.

Chevening, July 26th, 1828.

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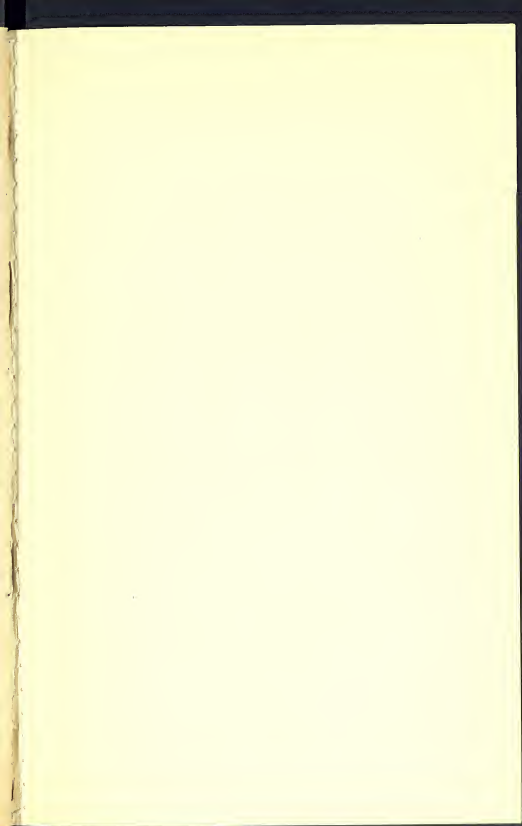
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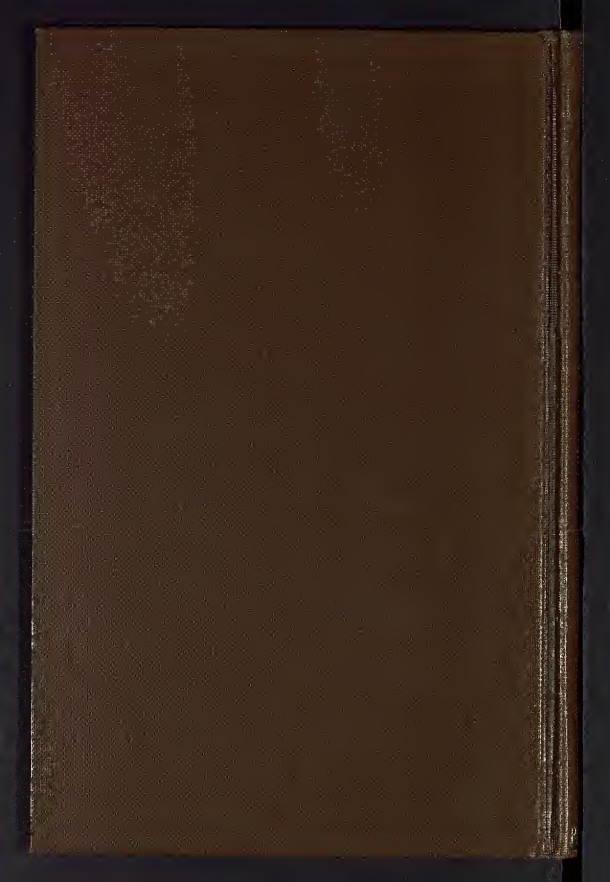


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